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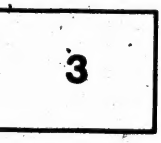

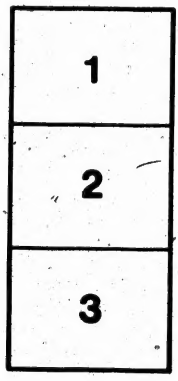

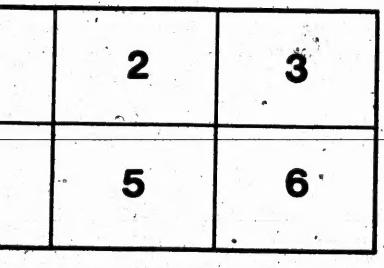

REMINISCENCES

OF

NEW-HAVEN

AND ITS INHABITANTS,

BY A SON OF

"AULD REEKIE."

"Weel may the Boatie row, and better may she speed.
"Weel may the Boatie row, that gains the Barnies breed.
"The Boatie rows, the Boatie rows, the Boatie rows fu' weel.
"And mickle luck attend the Boat, the Merline and the Creel."
—*Old Song.*

WOODSTOCK, C. W.:
WM. WARWICK, PUBLISHER.
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It has often been remarked, that to a stranger visiting Edinburgh for the first time, nothing is more strange and enexplicable than the difference betwixt the inhabitants of the fishing village of Newhaven, and those of the modern Athens.

In dress, in language, and in physical development the men and women of Newhaven appear as of a distinct race from the rest of Scotchmen; and although they are in daily communication with the Capital, distant only about three miles, yet the constantly varying of Fashions in dress or manners of the Edinburgh ladies makes no difference whatever with the women of Newhaven; there they are, dressed just as were their great, great, grand-mothers, one hundred and fifty years since.

For the enlightenment of their sisters at a distance, and who may not have seen them, let me describe one, and which portrait will answer for them all, old and young.

The head (to begin with) is never covered with a bonnet, but a large shawl or handkerchief, folded cornerwise is passed over the head, and tied under the chin, the loose corners falling down behind; the very young girls commonly go bare headed, with the hair (generally black) fastened in a big knot on the top of the head with a horn comb, or a large brass pin. When at home, they wear a printed short-gown, but on going to market with their fish, they wear a sailor's heavy blue cloth pea-jacket, their petticoats are invariably of coarse striped woolen, and never come below the calf of the leg; they will commonly have from three to four, or even five, of these on at once; the upper one folded up, and fastened behind, so as to form a huge pocket, temporarily to deposit the proceeds of their sales.

Their legs covered with thick white or blue worsted stockings, and their feet with mens' heavy cow-hide shoes; the shortness of their petticoats displaying limbs, such as few men can match for stoutness—the muscular development of their whole body being more like a strong man—so that a stranger is apt to think them to be men in womens dress.

From the constant exercise of carrying heavy loads of fish in a huge creel to market, is to be attributed their great strength—each creel when full will contain a solid weight of fish sufficient for two ordinary men—a broad leather belt which suspends the creel is passed over their foreheads to sustain this enormous weight.

The men are in the usual fishermen's garb, viz: a sou-wester cap, (as sailors term it) and one or two heavy blue cloth pea-jackets, very wide cloth or canvas trousers, and long boots, coming up to the top of the thigh.

The men never go to the market with the fish, this is entirely the province of the women; they generally assist the men in unloading the boats, and in providing and embarking everything necessary for the herring or deep-sea

fishing, when the men with their large boats will be absent several weeks.

It is difficult to give a stranger any correct idea of the peculiar cry of these women on a winter night in the streets of Edinburgh, but it is something like this:—"Whale a'-o'—caller o-u," with an upward inflection of the voice in the last syllable. It means when translated into English:—"Who will buy oysters, caller oysters."

This little sketch then is not so much a story, as a deleniation of character of these strange people, by the preserving of a few anecdotes that possibly otherwise might be lost, and a few reminiscences of a long acquaintance with them.

They are a kind-hearted and hospitable people, both men and women, yet in dealing with them in the market, if you are not very careful, they will impose upon you, by asking twice as much as the article is worth. To illustrate this, I will give the following anecdote:

An English friend of mine went with me to the fish-market, to make some purchases,—I cautioned him not to give the price first asked. He went up to a middle aged woman who had some very good haddocks—they were then in good season, but rather scarce, on account of some stormy days. Having picked out half-a-dozen, he asked the price. "Weel Sir, ye may hae thae sax for three and saxpence, an' they are dirt cheap at that." "Why, my good woman, that is certainly too much; I will give you eighteen pence for them. (I stood back to see how he would manage with her.) She replied, "Noo just hear till him—aughteen pence for thae sax fish! A', a' Sir, div ye no think shame to offer me that. "Look here Sir," said she (holding up the six fish on a board on which they were placed) "div ye ca' thay fish!" "Certainly," (said my friend, they are fish, and nothing else). Na' Sir, na', they are no fish, they are *men's lives*." He turned away, smiling. She called him back saying—"Come here Sir, as ye are an honest lookin' gentleman, I'll gie them till ye for half a croon, an' I wudna tak less frae my ain brither."

Here I whispered to him, "Show her two shillings," he did so, telling her, that was the utmost he would give her. Waving her hand she exclaimed: "Gae wa wi' yer two shillins," and he did go; but she immediately called him back, crying—"Here, here, tak them wi' ye;" and then commenced shouting, "a-rug, a-rug, o' the bonny caller haddies."

This I mention as a fair specimen of their mode of doing business.

The curiosity of my English friend was now excited to see more of these singular people; accordingly I arranged to go with him to the village next day—we started about noon, and on arriving at Newhaven, we went into the "Whale Inn," as I saw a number of the fishermen standing about the door.

I called for a bottle of ale, and we were discussing it preparitory to our going out in search of adventures.

I caught sight of Tom Wilson, one of the leading men of the village, calling him into the Inn to take a glass with us, a request which Tom was at all times ready to comply with. He shook hands with me, and was introduced to my friend, who I shall call Mr. B——.

Another bottle of ale and pipes were ordered, as an indispensable adjunct to our conversation, my aim being to draw Tom out for the benefit of Mr. B——; he gave us a full description of the state of the fisheries, the quantities lately caught, including a minute description of their fleet of boats, and how many now were building, and by whom. Then dashing into politics, he gave us an account of their many public meetings respecting reform in Parliament, of which reform Tom was a strong advocate.

This meeting was shortly before the passing of the Reform Bill. I complimented Tom upon the remarks he made, as indeed he was a sensible fellow for one in his station of life; and finished by saying, I hoped that when the Reform Bill was passed, and Newhaven came to be represented, either by herself, or (as it turned out to be) in conjunction with Leith, that Thomas Wilson, Esq.,

might have a chance of being elected, *member for Newhaven*!

"Now I'll tell you what it is Mr. M——, (said he) I'm gye sure I ken better what we puer fisher bodies require fra the hands o' Parliament than ony o' yer Embro or Leith writer bodies; but unless they mak the qualification gey an' low, Tam Wilson winna hae a chance."

We now rose to have a stroll through the village, and Mr. B—— having expressed a desire to see the interior of one of their cottages, our friend at once complied, by entering one possessed by *Adam Flucker*. Adam was at home, as also his wife Jannet, to whom we were introduced.

The house consisted of two appartments, the first room was the largest—in this was a large *box-bed*, (as it was called) it was made of pine, in pannels, with double folding doors, very much like a large wardrobe, and was so placed, that the back formed a sort of hall or lobby to the house, the doors facing a large fire-place in the outer room. My reason for being so particular will soon be seen.

The inner room, or spence, as it is called, was beyond this, and not quite so large, but rather better furnished, into which strangers are generally shown, (we were at first shown into it) and the day being warm, the window was open, it looked into a "Kale Yard," pretty well stocked with early vegetables, the walks being lined with a profusion of goosberry bushes, which thrive very well here.

As Adam's wife was employed in the outer room when we arrived, we returned into it, so as not to interrupt her household work. The large wide chimney was lined with many rows of haddocks, gutted and strung on small rods *risiring*, as it is termed; these "*risered haddies*" are cured in a much plainer way than the celebrated "finnan haddies," but are much in request in Edinburgh, as an ever-ready dish.

Jannet had gutted a quantity, and was busy stringing them up when we entered.

I observed that Adam had a large patch across his nose, and another on his fore-head.

After being seated a few minutes, Tom Wilson said,

looking shy: "Weel Adam, hoos yer nose,"—his reply was a scowl and a grunt from Adam, at which Tom and I laughed. Tom then turning to Jannet, saying in the same pawky way: "And Jannet, has Doctor Johnston bein ca-in on you lately." Jannet rose from her stool, on which she was sitting, saying: "Noo Tam Wilson, gif ye dinna haud yer tongue, and gie me ony mair o' yer nonsense, I'll clat yer chafts wi' this fish"—at which Tom and I laughed the louder.

Mr. B—— looked surprised, not seeing anything to produce so violent ebullition of mirth on our part; I winked to him, as much as to say—"you must wait for an explanation."

After Tom had soothed the Lady, and invited them both to come down to his house and get a dish of oysters, a boat of his having arrived, being the first boat of the season. It was the first week in September, the beginning of the Oyster season.

Adam was quite willing to come, but his better half would not permit him—saying to him: "Adam, would you mak a fule o' yoursell, gaun through the toon wi' sic a face as that?—Na Tamas, we'l come doon after it's dark, and see what kind of a haul ye hae goten."

Tom now invited Mr. B—— and myself to his house to try the Oysters; his house was near the *Pier*—he also kept in a shop in the front of it a few groceries, whisky, ale and porter, as his sign-board informed the public. It had a neat little room at one side, with a white sanded floor, a long table and two wooden benches, to accommodate a few stray friends. I was turning into this little "*sanctum*" as I had been used to, when Tom said: "Na, na, Mr. M——, come ben the hoose, intil the wife's spence, whar ye'l no be fash'd wi' ony o' thae rough cheels comin' in, an' we'l hae our crack by oursells."

Mrs. Wilson, a portly dame, of about forty summers, was introduced to Mr. B——; as for me, I was an old friend, and frequent visitor.

Three plates of stewed oysters were at once ordered.

In the mean time, Tom told his wife to send in the materials for Whisky toddy. When she brought in the decanter from the front shop, or bar, he requested her to take it back, and bring her own private bottle, kept for special friends.

While the oysters were getting ready, Mr. B—— asked Tom and I what it was that provoked Adam Flucker and his wife, and was the cause of so much mirth to us. Tom at once began to laugh, and I could not resist the contagion.

"Mr. M——, (cried Tom between the many explosions of his powerful lungs) "just you tell the story to the gentleman, for the life o' me I canna do it." Trying then to sober myself down in some measure, I began:

You must know then, in the first place, Mr. B——, that the clergyman of this parish is the Rev. Mr. Johnston, of North Leith church; he is a kind good old man to all his people, especially to the inhabitants of Newhaven, knowing as he does the great ignorance and superstition that exists among them. He very frequently visits each family, catechising them, and praying with them. Now, it happened one night, not long since, that my friend Tom, here, and Adam, had a drinking bout. and both got what is called "*gey fou*," and in going home, Adam fell and got the wounds you observed on his face.

On the day after his fall, the Reverend Dr. was visiting in this neighbourhood, when a woman living next door to Adam saw him coming up the street, and ran in and told Jannet. She immediately bundled Adam into the Box Bed, in the front room, formerly mentioned. She had just got him safely shut in when the Doctor came to the door.

"How do you do Jannet,"—said the Doctor,—"Brawly, brawly, Doctor, thanks tae ye for spearin—and hoo's a' wi' ye yersell, Doctor." "I thank you Jannet,"—said the Doctor—"I am in my usual health. Jannet, I am just come to catechise you a little."

Stepping into the house, she was leading the way into the spence, but he stopped and sat down in the outer room, and right opposite the Box Bed.

"Now Jannet,"—continued the Doctor—I hope you will be able to give me right and proper answers to the questions I shall ask you." "Ou aye, Doctor, troth wul I Sir." "Then the first question I shall ask,"—said the Doctor—"is this: Can you tell me how Adam fell?" "The Lord hae a care o' me, Doctor, wha ever telt ye that Adam fell." The good Doctor had a pinch of snuff raised nearly to his nose when she gave this answer; he paused in utter astonishment and said—"Jannet, I really am astonished at you: can you not give me a straight and honest answer to such a simple question. Do you ever read your Bible, Jannet?" "Atweel I do Doctor, but what has that to do wi' Adam's fa'en." "Jannet, I certainly have reason to think you are not so utterly ignorant; I am sure any of your neighbours could answer me that question, were I to ask them."

"Ah me, Doctor, what a set o' clashin neighbours I maun hae; noo if you wull hae it, ye shall hae it, Doctor, and I'll tell ye hoo Adam fell. Adam met Tam Wilson, and said he, Tam, will ye hae a gill—sae they went into the 'Whale Inn' and they had twa gills; and comin' up the street, Tam says: noo Adam, come into my hoose, an' I'll gie you a gill; sa in they went, an thae twa got rorin fu; and as Adam in the dark cam up the street, he fell an' brack his nose." Jannet now threw open the doors of the Box Bed, saying: "And here he is. Come out Adam an' answer for yersell."

Before I got this length with my anecdote, Tom was jumping all round the room, and holding his sides with laughter. I was glad when his wife came in with the oysters, in hopes of stopping his obstriporous mirth.

Mr. B—— was much pleased with the anecdote, as illustrating the case of the parish Clergy in trying to enlighten these simple and ignorant people.

After discussing the oysters, which we all declared to be excellent, we had some good Gin Toddy, which Mrs. Wilson brought in, while her daughter, a strapping lass of eighteen, was removing the remains of the Oyster feast.

I took occasion to compliment Peggy, as they called her,

and jocularly remarked that I hoped she would soon be getting a good husband. She did not blush as our city Misses usually do on such occasions, but said—"I'm in na great hurry, but I hope to hae my turn wi' the ither lasses." But her mother, turning to me, said: "She get a man! What would she dae wi' a man? She canna won a man's bread yet." This remark of Mrs. Wilson's forcibly illustrates the received opinion of these sturdy wives, that it is *they* only, who maintain the family. So industrious are they, that in certain seasons of the summer, when fish is scarce, they go into the fruit trade, and at every street corner you may see one or more of them, with their creels and baskets full of goosberries and cherries for sale.

I formerly referred to their great strength and indurance; I shall now give one or two instances of their belligerant and pugnacious propensities.

A friend of mine told me, he one day saw a large and powerful woman in hot dispute with a young, but sturdy fish wife. After much scolding and recrimination, the large woman at last struck the young fish wife; she quickly set down her creel, and pushing up her sleeves, pitched into her antagonist in regular Tom Sayers' style; and that to such good account, that though much the smaller and younger woman, she soon placed the other "hors de combat."

I have often wondered that they were seldom, or never robbed in going home at eleven, twelve, or one o'clock at night on the Bonnington Road, but such was seldom the case; yet I remember many years ago, of an attempt at robbing a fish wife, which resulted in the complete defeat of the robber. The case was as follows:

An Oyster woman going home, after having sold all her oysters, at a lonely part of the road, near Bonnington Bridge, she was overtaken by a man, who entered into conversation with her. When they had passed the bridge some little distance, and no house being near, the man suddenly stopped her, demanding her money. Thinking at first it was a joke in order to frighten her, she laughed at him; but when he seized her, and attempted to get at

her pocket, she nimbly threw off her creel, and at once grappled with him. The fellow very soon found he was no match for her, and had the baseness to draw a knife on her, he had concealed, seeing which, she redoubled her efforts, and actually threw him down, but not before he had made a lounge at her breast, which she warded off by knocking up his right arm as he fell. His own knife then inflicted a dreadful gash under his chin. When she got him down, she succeeded in disarming him, and threw the knife away. But she did not in the dark, at first, perceive that he was wounded. In adjusting her clothes, she saw considerable blood on her breast, and knowing she was not wounded herself, and not seeing the fellow attempt to rise, she became alarmed, and on examining him, thought him dead! She ran back to the nearest house, a Mr. Cunningham's, I believe, at the Bonnington Mills; luckily they were not all gone to bed, and after getting a lantern, two men accompanied her to the scene of action. On arriving there, the man was gone, but upon seeing considerable traces of blood, they followed them, and had not gone far when they found the fellow lying under the hedge, and fainted from loss of blood. Having temporarily bound up his wounds, and sent for a Doctor, who soon arrived at the house where the man had been removed to. After his wound was properly dressed, and a little stimulant given him, he was soon able to speak, when the rascal deliberately affirmed that the fish-wife attempted to rob him, and had cut him with her knife; this the poor woman stoutly denied.

Next day the Procurator Fiscal, having arrived, he made a rigid examination into the case, in conjunction with the Doctor, and in the mean time the bloody knife was found on the spot and produced. He at first denied that the knife was his property, but afterwards admitted that it was his, but said that the fish-wife had taken it from him in order to kill him.

Neither the Procurator nor the Doctor seemed inclined to believe this statement, especially as the police authorities knew him to be a fellow of very bad character.—

They therefore fixed upon a plan to get him to confess the truth.

They had him conveyed to the Royal Infirmary, in Edinburgh, where after examination of his wound by several Doctors, they, in his presence, and with much audible whispering, and wise head-shakings informed him that his life was in great danger, and that possibly he might die before morning.

As he was an Irish Roman Catholic, he requested to see a Priest, and one was immediately sent him; after he had confessed and received absolution from the Priest, the Procurator Fiscal, and medical authorities were informed by the Priest, that although he could not divulge the whole nature of his confession, yet he was authorized to inform them that in the near prospect of death, he had confessed, that the woman was quite innocent of what he had charged her with, and that her statement was perfectly true.

On the Procurator Fiscal, going to his bed side, he repeated this confession, and begged them to send the woman to him, to receive her forgivness before he died; this was accordingly done. It is needless to say that after a few days the fellow was quite well again, but as he was an old offender, he was detained in Jail to answer for the crime of highway robbery, and at his trial, upon his own confession, he was at once convicted—and, as at that time highway robbery was a capital crime, he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was afterwards commuted to banishment.

I believe a subscription was got up to indemnify the poor fish-wife for the trouble she had been put to, as also to mark the public approbation of her brave and heroic conduct in defending herself.

The Newhaven fish-wives have always been celebrated for their accomplishments in scolding. I remember once in passing down High Street, of Edinburgh, near the Nether Bow, of witnessing a *set-too* of this description, by two fish-wives. What the cause of quarrel was I did not learn, but

they abused each other, until I thought they had exhausted the whole vocabulary of Billingsgate, when suddenly one of them changed her tactics, by at once shutting her mouth, and folding her arms, and with a smiling countenance looked steadily into the others face.

The other belligerent having now the whole vocal field to herself, sent volley after volley at her opponent, of the most abusive epithets I ever heard.

Receiving in return nothing but the contempteous and scornful looks of her antagonist;—this seemed only to make the other more enraged. So placing her arms a-kimbs, and bending her body to an angle of forty-five degrees, she exclaimed:—"Speak ye limmer or I'll burst."

My English friend, Mr. B——, being now on intimate terms with Tom Wilson, made frequent excursions with him in his boat, and on a very calm day he went out in the boat to have a deep water swim, when Tom remarked: "Weel Mr. B——, I'll tell ye an exploit of yer freend Mr. M——, which I dinna ken if he ever tel't ye of it, but it was a gey clever anc. There was a printer lad, a namesake of mine, wha wrocht in Ballantine's printin' office, in Embro; he was a great singer—I dar sae ye may hard tell o' him. Sae he an' Mr. M——, and ithers o' his singin' freends used to get my boat just as ye are dooin noo, to hae a swim and a sang on the water; weel Sir, yae day they were braggin' o' their various exploits in the water, and as yer freend Mr. M—— was a guid flute player as well as a swimer, this Mr. John Wilson offer'd to bet Mr. M—— that he could na swim and play a tune on the flute without wettin' it. The bet, an Oyster Supper, for all hands, (I think there war five or sax) was at ance taken, and on a calm evening, just like this, I rowed them out. Mr. M—— stripped, and was soon in the water, when the flute was handed to him, and (would ye believe me Sir) he played the tune ca'ed *Paddy Carry* twa or three times ower, keepin' time wi' his feet for a' the warld as gif he was dancin' on a room floor. Anc o' the Lonon Steamers had just anchor'd, and the passengers were comin' ashore in boats, as they did at that time. They lay on

their oars, lookin' wi' wonder at the heed wi' the flute bobin up and doon i' the water. When he finish'd, a' the ladies and gentlemen in the boats—I'm sure there war forty o' them forby oursells—gave him three hearty cheers. Weel Sir, we had the oyster supper at my hoose, and a merry nicht we had o' it, and what wi' sangs and things thae o'aad *Glees*, they kept it up till the "wee short hour ayont the twall."

Thus far our Reminiscences of our friend Tom Wilson—I believe he has been dead several years! Peace to his manes! "For he was a right good fellow which nobody can deny."

I shall close these Reminiscences of Newhaven with the following story, related to me by an old Septugenarian fish-wife, and which shows, that among these rude, but kind hearted people, there were not wanting instances of genuine romantic love and affection. I shall give the story as near as I can in the old woman's words, and style, as there is a something that touches the heart in the rich broad Doric of Old Scotland, which we should preserve from being lost:

"Near saxty years syne, when I was a bit skelpin lassie, I mind weel o' a bonnie lass ca'ed Peggy, wha was born in this village.

I's no tell ye her ither name, nor the names o' ony o' the ithers mentioned in this story, because some o' the freends o' them a' are still leeven here and in Leith.

Weel Sir, ye ken that the Newhaven weemin are no muckle praised for beauty—on the contrary we are as homely weemin as to be fand ony where—and I'm nae exception mysell to the rule; but Sir, we can *wurk*, aye we can dae *men's wurk*, whilk is mair than ony o' yer painted dalls in Embro can do.

Weel, as I was sayin', Peggy was a weel-fared lass, 'tho her faither and mother were as plain as ony o' our Newhaven folks, but they were what we ca' "weel aff in the warld."

Her faither owned several boats, and had several hooses rented, belangin to him, besides the ane they lived in, and havin' some money in Sir William Forbes' Bank, with

which he gied Peggy sic an education as nane, auld or young had in a' the toun.

He and his wife were very prood o' their dochter, and as she would hae a guid tocher and plenishin fra the auld folk, they naturly thocht na lad in Newhaven guid enough for Peggy, and sa they pitched upon a Mr. T——, a ship builder in Leith, wha was reputed to be very rich, and was a bachelor of forty-five years, and as plain and rough lookin' as ony o' our fishermen.

This Mr. T—— was requently ca'in on her faither, wi' whom he was very chief, having built several boats for him.

Now about this time there was a grand ball geen in Leith, ca'ed the *Trades Ball*, and Mr. T—— invited Peggy and me to gang till it; but Peggy didna want to gang, as she hated the ship builder, and the mair specially as he was gay an' apt to get fou at sic places; but as her faither press'd her, she consented if I would gang wi' her, 'tho I was mony a year younger than her; sa we went, and it was the first ball ever I went till in my life.

Mr. T—— paid us great attention; but Peggy was there introduced till a weel-fared and bra lad about her ain age; I'll just ca' him Willie, as some o' his freends are still leevin in Leith, 'tho puer lad he himsel has been lang deed. His faither was a ship chaunler in Leith, and had a guid business, and had geen his son Willie a guid education.

Weel, Mr. T——, after dancin' twa or three times wi' Peggy, gaed doon the stair wi' some o' his cronies to hae a drink, and whan he came intil the ball room again, she was dancin wi' Willie. He looked as black as a thunder cloud, but said naething, and when he asked her to dance the neist reel, she said she was engaged; aff he went again to the drinkin' room, and whan he came back he was *gay fou*, and he looked as if he wanted to quarrel wi' Willie, but Willie tried a' he could no to quarael wi' him.

Peggy now determined no to gang hame wi' Mr. T——,

especially when she saw a' the young men at the ball makin' game of him for the state he was in; so her new Joe Willie saw us baith hame, and next mornin' her faither having heard wha had brocht her hame, was dreadfu' angry.

The auld man, it seems, kent Willie's faither, and had some dispute wi' him in settlin' some account for ship chandlerie, and fra that day to this would never speak till him; and now when he thocht that Willie was like to be a rival to Mr. T——, he positively ordered Peggy never mair to speak till him. But the neist nicht, Willie, na kenen this, ca'ed to see Peggy, and he hadna been mony minutes in the hoose, when in cam her faithar, he looked at Willie as gif he would eat him up, and asked him what he cam for. Willie very civily telt him that he ca'ed to see if Miss Peggy was no the waur o' bein' out sae late. The auld man cut him short by tellin' him to gang awa hame, and never maire to speak till his dochter—he said he kent brawly what he cam for, but no to fash his thumb, as his dochter was engaged. Peur Willie took up his hat, and shaken hands wi' Peggy, wished her guid nicht; but as he cam doon the street he met me, and asked me gif it was true that she was promised to Mr. T——. I said, I kent the auld man wanted Mr. T—— to get her, but I didna think Peggy ever would gie her consent;—sa he took his pencil and wrote a few lines till her, askin' her to meet him neist nicht at ten o'clock, up the sands, at Wardie, and I promised to gie it quietly till her—this I did neist mornin'. She telt me afterwards that she met him, and he spear'd at her gif it was true what I telt him. She said she would dee rather than marry him. Of course he at once declared his love for her, and before they parted, ('tho she did not confess it) he was gay shure that she loved him.

I have aye thocht, that an obstinant faither or mither makes a lassie only ower ready to tack the first offer of ane she has a likin' to, and wha can blame her—it is just what you may ca' *human nature*—we a' like to hae our ain wuy, especially in ony affairs o' the heart.

I kepet my Joe danglin 'round me for mair than a month

before I would say *yes*—but I dinna ken but I would hae said *yes* the first time he spear'd at me gif my faither had *ordered* me never to speak till him again.

Weel Sir, after that, they used to meet [illegible]maist every nicht on Wardie sands, after her faither and mither were in bed; but some how he fand it out, and then he fastened her window and took the key o' the door in his pouch every nicht after.

But "Love laughs at Lock-Smiths."—sae they corresponded by letter, and I was the bearer. At last they determined to mak a run-away match o' it, and agreed that on the neist Friday after dark, and before her faither shut up the hoose for the nicht, I was to gang wi' them till a Minister near the head o' Leith walk, wha would marry them. They had been cried twice yae Sunday, and ance the neist, in South Leith Kirk, near by whar Willie resided.

As I thocht Friday an unlucky day, I telt them that, but they only lauched at me, and said, that as Willie's uncle sail'd ane o' the Leith and London Smacks, they had agreed to gang wi' him to London, and stop in his hoose till her faither got ower his anger. They would sail at high water by four o'clock on Saturday 'mornin'—sae everything was arranged accordingly.

But as I was but a silly young lassie, I didna like to do sae without [illegible]y mither, she said she did not approve o' it, but [illegible]d baith Peggy and Willie, she would not interfere. But afterwards she changed her mind, and without tellin' me, went to Peggy's mither, to beg o' her to get the auld man till agree till the marriage. He seemed to consider a while, when she mentioned it till him, and the neist day bein' Thursday, he telt his wife he would let them do as they liked. We were a' glad when we heard this—but on Friday forenoon he went to the offisher wha commanded the press-gang in Leith, and telt him that a young man was gaun to rin awa wi' a dochter o' his to foreign parts, and wanted him to press him on board o' man-o'-war. This was readily agreed to, as they were much in want o' men to fill up a sloop o' war just gaun to sail.

He agreed to gang and show them the man that nicht. Willie's trunk was on board the Smack that day, and some o' Peggy's things that she managed to smuggle out to me, —they little suspectin' what was to tak place.

About nine o'clock at nicht we baith started up the Bonnington road to a place appointed to meet Willie—we got safe to the Ministers hoose—and the marriage was completed without interruption.

We then went to the Black Bull Inn, whar a nice little supper had been ordered by Willie. About eleven o'clock, a post chase, ordered by Willie, came to the door, and we entered it, the man being ordered to drive to the shore, where the Leith and London Smacks lay.

But just before we got to the foot o' Leith walk, a number o' sailors, armed wi' cutlasses and pistols stopped the coach, and openin' the door, they seized puer Willie and handcuffed him, after a fearfu' resistance on his part. He called on several persons near for help, but they seein' the man-o'-war ofisher and his men a' around, they were afraid to interfere.

We were then pulled out o' the coach, and the man and it ordered back to Edinburgh.

Poor Peggy's tears and intreaties were a' in vain wi' these hard hearted men—sae we had to gang hame on our ain feet, and the puer young thing in a half married state like to break her heart.

Shortly after she got hame, her faither cam in, but did not say where he had been;—we afterwards learned that he was with the press-gang, but kepet back out o' sicht. Puer Willie was ta'en handcuffed that nicht on board the sloop-o'-war;—in vain he entreated the Captain to let him write a letter to his faither, wha would prove that he never was a sailor.

The Captain said as his Majesty was sae muckle in want o' men he would just keep him, landsman tho' he was, and he at ance gied him a place on the gun deck, as a landsman.

A' this we afterwards learned by a letter frae a Leith

lad, a ship-mate o' Willie's, dated frae Sheerness, where the sloop put in for repairs after a severe fecht wi' a French ship, the letter also telt o' puer Willie's death, being killed in that fecht;—but we didna get the letter till a month after his death.

Weel Sir, the neist day after the marriage, puer Peggy was in a ragin' fever, and the doctor for mony days didna think she would live. She kepet ca'in on Willie to come till her, and tak her hame, for she didna ken either her faither or mither, and didna even think it was their hoose.

Sair, sair, did her faither now regret his cruelty to her and Willie. He tried to mak excuse by sayin' what a' body kens—that we Newhaven folks, like the Gipsies, dinna like to marry out o' our ain folks; he tried to mak us believe that *that* was the cause o' his hatred o' Willie, but we a' kent better.

After three weeks illness, nature and a good constitution prevailed, but the fever left her a comple wreck o' what she had been. She was still beautiful, but wasted and spent to a skeleton; and wuar than a' that, her mind was a complete wreck, as weel as her body. She would stroll for hours along the shore, aye lookin' out for Willie's ship.

But yae nicht, when the moon was at the full she slipped out and sat doon on a stane by the shore; when she was missed, her faither went after her and saw her sittin'.—Suddenly she started up, and extendin' her arms towards the sea, gave a lang and piercing scream. Her faither ran up till her, and took hold o' her, but she pushed him awa, and pointing wi' her puer thin finger out to sea, cried—"Look, look faither, there is puer Willie a' covered wi' bluid, and he is waving me to come till him. You hae murdered him! You hae murdered him! Let me gang till him," she cried—and breakin' frae him, she rushed intil the sea. He rushed after her, and wi' the help o' some men wha ran out on herin' her screams, he got her hame mair dead than alive, and a' wet wi' the sea.

She was now completely crazy, and never after was her ain-sel again.

Weel Sir, just that day neist month cam the letter frae the Leith lad I telt ye o', and frae it we learned, that on that very day, when on the sands she thocht she saw his bluidy ghaist—on that very day he was killed in battle. She never saw the letter, nor did we tell her o' his death, but she seemed to believe him dead, as she very carefully sought out some black gown o' her mithers, and got some bits o' crape frae me and ithers o' her acquaintances, and dressed hersel' in deep mournin'.

Her puer distracted mither let her do what she liked. She seldom spoke—she read her Bible, and gaed to Kirk wi' her faither and mother, and was quiet and easily managed. When her faither brocht hame ony newspapers wi' stories o' sea fechts, (and God kens there was seldom a week during that lang French war, but there was news o' some battle on land or sea) we aye carefully kept such papers out o' her sicht, and she never asked for them. But yae day, I dinna ken hoo it happened, she got haud o' an auld paper, and began readin' it; suddenly she gave a fearfu' scream, and before her mither could reach her, she fainted clean awa. She was put to bed, and the usual means were employed to restore her, but it was long before she cam to.

On takin' up the paper that had faen frae her hand, it was fand to be the very paper wi' the particulars o' that wearifu' sea fecht, and among the list o' the killed was puer Willie's name!

That nicht she asked her faither and mother to let her see puer Willie's body;—it was lang ere they could mak her believe that his body had never come hame. She only shook her head, and said—"Cruel, cruel! if ye winna bring him till me, I'll soon gang till him!" and sae she did. For ever after that day she would scarcely eat onything, but lay wi' her bonnie blue een aye steeket, and every noo an' then drawin' deep and heavy sighs.

The doctor telt them to keep her quiet, and to coax her to tak ony nourishment she liked.

Yae mornin' shortly after this, her mither was surprised

to hear her call: "Mither, mither!" She ran till her, and fand her sittin' up in her bed, and evidently noo quite in her right mind. Owerjoyed she ran to fetch her faither, and when he was comin' he met the doctor gaun to visit her. I cam in at the same time, and we were a' congratulatin' each ither on her restored reason, but the doctor gravely shook his head. She took a little sip o' wine, but could scarcely swallow it.

The doctor took her faither aside in the neist room, and telt him he feared that death was near—that this restorin' o' her reason, was a sure sign o' her near end, and was a mercifu' dispensation o' a k[illegible] Providence which he had often had occasion to observe in mony cases like this. And sae it turned out—for that night after speakin' to us a' quite sensible like, she held out her hand to her faither and mither and me, and bade us a' guid nicht, sayin' she wanted to sleep. She soon fell into a sound sleep. She murmured much in her sleep, but we could'na weel understand what she said; but at last we heard her distinctly say—"Yes Willie, I'm comin'! I'm comin'!" after which she was silent, and we were a' silent for nearly an hour. At last her mither started up and gaed to the bedside, and looked earnestly at her. She then took doon a sma' lookin'-glass frae the wa' and held it till her mouth; there was na mark o' breath upon it! A' was ower—puer Peggy was gane!!

Such, dear reader, was the story of the old fish wife, given as near as I can in her own words; but I should fail were I to attempt to convey to the reader the effect of her simple and pathetic manner of giving it.

This story clearly proves, that with all their superstition and ignorance, as compared with their more polished and educated neighbours of the modern Athens, that in many cases, their rough and uncouth manners covers much of the finer sensibilities of genuine love and affection.

I have no doubt, were their character more closely studied, there would be found in many cases, especially where education and religion has had its due influence upon

them, a strong under stratum of the most tender and refined emotions of our human nature.

I have not been in their quaint and romantic village for more than thirty years, having been all that time in Canada, where the rapid advance of religion and education has done, and is still doing so much for the moral and intellectual improvement of our countrymen. Yet, I sincerely hope before long, again to visit them, and find them not behind the rest of the rural population of dear Old Scotland.

THE AUTHOR.

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